

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 DHA-02 OMB-01 /077 W

----- 117726

R 071613Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2004

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 20441

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, CN

SUBJECT: COMORO ISLANDS

REF: PARIS 20275 (NOTAL)

1. COMORO SITUATION WAS DISCUSSED BY EMBOFF AUGUST 6 AND 7 WITH QUAI DESK OFFICER BERTRAND, WHO CONTINUES TO COMPLAIN OF LACK OF COORDINATION ON THIS SUBJECT ON PART OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OVERSEAS TERRITORIES, OLIVIER STIRN. BERTRAND SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE COULD DISCOVER, THERE HAD BEEN NO SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF COMORO ISLANDS AT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AUGUST 6; CERTAINLY COMOROS WERE NOT MENTIONED IN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS COMMUNIQUE. BERTRAND ADMITS THAT THIS LEAVES GOF'S POSITION REGARDING RECOGNITION OF COMORO ISLANDS, FOLLOWING AUGUST 3 COUP, UNCLEAR. FRANCE PREFERS THAT OTHER STATES NOT RECOGNIZE COMORO ISLANDS FOR THE TIME BEING. BERTRAND SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO OAU'S GENERAL RECOGNITION OF COMORO ISLANDS' INDEPENDENCE' 19 COUNTRIES HAVE MORE OR LESS EXPLICITLY EXTENDED RECOGNITION. ONLY NON-AFRICAN COUNTRIES ON THIS LIST ARE SAUDI ARABIA, SOUTH YEMEN, SYRIA, GUYANA AND CHINA.

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2. BERTRAND SAID THAT MAJOR UNRESOLVED PROBLEM IS

WHETHER MAYOTTE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, INCLUDING ITS LEADER MARCEL HENRY, WILL ACCEPT NEW MORONI REGIME AND WORK OUT MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE ARRANGEMENT. THIS WOULD MEAN FEDERAL CONSTITUTION WITH ENOUGH AUTONOMY FOR MAYOTTE TO SATISFY THAT ISLAND'S DEMANDS; AND, THEREFORE, PERMIT PRESERVATION OF COMORO UNITY WHILE BEING IN ACCORDANCE WITH FRANCE'S RECENTLY-ADOPTED LAW ON COMORO INDEPENDENCE.

3. COMMENT: GOF IS OBVIOUSLY IN SOME DISARRAY REGARDING COMORO ISLANDS. IF WE HAD TO GUESS, WE WOULD DOUBT THAT GOF ACTUALLY ENGINEERED THE COUP AGAINST ABDALLAH, ALTHOUGH IT IS ENTIRELY TO ADVANTAGE OF FRENCH AND THEY WILL TAKE FULL BENEFIT FROM IT. SOME FRENCH OFFICIALS MAY HAVE BEEN IMPLICATED LOCALLY IN LAST SUNDAY'S COMORO COUP. HOWEVER, DURING THAT WEEK-END, STATE SECRETARY FOR OVERSEAS TERRITORIES WAS TOO FAR AWAY FROM FRANCE AND HIS MINISTRY'S OFFICES TOO INACTIVE TO MAKE US SUSPECT AN OFFICIAL PLOT. ON OTHER HAND, WE SUPPOSE GOF MUST HAVE HEARD THAT SOME SORT OF COUP WAS BEING HATCHED BY ITS FRIENDS IN MORONI AND GOF ACQUIESCED WITHOUT ACTUALLY PARTICIPATING. GAMMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RECOGNITION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS20441
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750273-0318
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750873/aaaacmsl.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PARIS 20275
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <03 OCT 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMORO ISLANDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, CN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006